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Incentive Awards

For Supervisory Use



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of Personnel

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CASH AWARDS FOR SUGGESTIONS

ELIGIBILITY—Any employee of the Department on or after August 2, 1946, who makes a suggestion which is adopted for use and which will result in improvement or economy in operations.

CRITERIA—No award should be paid to an employee for any suggestion which represents a part of the normal requirements of the duties of his position.

SUBMISSION—Awards exceeding \$100 will be submitted through channels to the Director of Personnel.

APPROVAL AUTHORITY—Agency Efficiency Awards Committee amounts up to and including \$100. Amounts over \$100 to be approved by the Departmental Committee.

TYPE OF RECOGNITION—Cash to be paid in accordance with the Department's table of cash awards for savings.

LEGAL AUTHORITY—P. L. 600, 79th Cong., and E. O. 9817.

STEP INCREASE FOR SUPERIOR ACCOMPLISHMENT

ELIGIBILITY—Individual employees who come within the scope of the Department's within-grade step increase plan (8 AR 160).

CRITERIA—

1. Outstanding performance with all aspects of performance not only exceeding normal requirements but outstanding and deserving special commendation (Employees who receive outstanding efficiency ratings should be considered for step increase for superior accomplishment).
2. Sustained work performance for a period of at least 3 months of such nature that it merits special recognition for superior accomplishment over and above the normal requirements of the employee's position, provided that the current performance rating is not less than satisfactory.
3. Initiation of an idea, method, or device which has been developed and adopted because it is expected to improve the public service or provide for more economical operations in the public interest.
4. A special act or service in the public interest related to official employment over and above the normal position requirements, of an unusual or distinctive character, where its recognition as a basis for an additional advancement would serve as a definite incentive to others.

SUBMISSION—At any time in accordance with 8 AR chapter 62, section 4.

APPROVAL AUTHORITY—Employees having delegated employment authority. Post-audit by the Department and the Civil Service Commission.

TYPE OF RECOGNITION—One step increase in rate of basic compensation.

LEGAL AUTHORITY—Title VII of P. L. 429, 81st Cong.

CASH AWARD FOR EFFICIENCY

ELIGIBILITY—An employee or group of employees covered by Title X of P. L. 429 who by reason of a suggestion or improved work performance has caused their units to be outstanding in efficiency and economy of operations.

CRITERIA—

1. The suggestion or performance must be in line of the employee's duties.
2. The suggestion or performance must result in savings.
3. Savings may be demonstrated in terms of lower-unit cost on the same or smaller measurable production or lower unit cost on increased volume of production.
4. Savings must be accounted for either by:
 - a. Appropriation saving;
 - b. Increased output at the same cost;
 - c. Application of resources saved to some other necessary activity.
5. The award may be granted only when experience with the operation is sufficient to indicate that savings will be achieved.
6. The award can not exceed 25 percent of the estimated saving the first year of operation nor an amount equal to three times the step increase of the employee's grade.

SUBMISSION—To the Director of Personnel through channels[†] at any time.

APPROVAL AUTHORITY—Department Efficiency Awards Committee.

TYPE OF RECOGNITION—Cash in accordance with the Department's awards table based upon the amount of savings.

LEGAL AUTHORITY—Title X of P. L. 429, 81st Cong. (Classification Act of 1949).

SALARY INCREASE FOR EFFICIENCY

ELIGIBILITY—An employee or group of employees covered by Title X of P. L. 429 who by reason of a suggestion or improved work performance have caused their units to be outstanding in efficiency and economy of operations.

CRITERIA—Subject to all the requirements of a cash award for efficiency plus the fact that a salary increase for efficiency can be given only when there have been such substantial savings to the Government that limitation on the amount of cash award will result in an inadequate reward.

SUBMISSION—To the Director of Personnel through channels at any time.

APPROVAL AUTHORITY—Department Efficiency Awards Committee.

TYPE OF RECOGNITION—One-, two-, or three-step salary increase in accordance with the Department's awards table.

LEGAL AUTHORITY—Title X of P. L. 429, 81st Cong. (Classification Act of 1949).

SUPERIOR SERVICE AWARD

ELIGIBILITY—An employee or group of employees who render a service which constitutes a meritorious contribution to the public, to agriculture, or to the Department's operations.

CRITERIA—

1. Meritorious service to agriculture and rural life.
2. Valuable contribution to science.
3. Effective public administration.
4. Meritorious authorship.
5. Unusual courage or competence in an emergency.
6. Meritorious service of a creative nature.
7. Meritorious execution of duties establishing an exemplary record.
8. Initiation of a suggestion that has resulted in important savings in money, time, materials, personnel, or equipment.
9. Initiative in devising work methods that result in important savings in money, time, materials, personnel, or equipment.
10. Achievement in improving the morale of employees, with consequent improvement in work performance.

SUBMISSION—To the Director of Personnel through channels on or before February 1 of each year.

APPROVAL AUTHORITY—Secretary of Agriculture.

TYPE OF RECOGNITION—

Individual:

1. Silver medal.
2. Certificate.
3. Silver lapel emblem.

Unit:

1. Bronze plaque identifying the unit, describing the achievement, and containing a replica of the medal.

LEGAL AUTHORITY—P. L. 600, 79th Cong. and E. O. 9817.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

ELIGIBILITY—An employee or group of employees who make an outstanding contribution to the public service, to agriculture, or to the operations of the Department.

CRITERIA—

1. Outstanding service to agriculture and rural life.
2. Major contribution to science.
3. Outstanding skill in public administration.
4. Distinguished authorship.
5. Notable creative service.
6. Heroic action.

SUBMISSION—To the Director of Personnel through channels on or before February 1 of each year.

APPROVAL AUTHORITY—Secretary of Agriculture.

TYPE OF RECOGNITION—

Individual:

1. Gold medal.
2. Certificate.
3. Gold lapel emblem.

Unit:

1. Bronze plaque identifying the unit, describing the achievement, and containing a replica of the medal.

LEGAL AUTHORITY—P. L. 600, 79th Cong. and E. O. 9817.

HINTS TO SUPERVISORS FOR DETERMINING THE APPROPRIATE TYPE OF AWARD

From the foregoing, it can be seen that although the various types of awards have different eligibility requirements, there is, nevertheless, overlapping and, in certain instances, individuals may be eligible for several types of award.

The following rules will help determine the proper action to be recommended:

1. All suggestions which do not represent a part of the employees normal job requirements will be processed as Cash Awards for Suggestions. P. L. 600, 79th Cong., E. O. 9817.
2. All suggestions outstanding enough to merit recognition which represents a part of the employees normal job requirements and yield tangible savings in the conduct of his own operations will be processed as Cash Awards for Efficiency. Title X, P. L. 429, 81st Cong.
3. All other suggestions meriting recognition will be processed as Step Increases for Superior Accomplishment. Title VII, P. L. 429, 81st Cong.
4. When sustained performance or a special act or service merits recognition and has yielded tangible savings in the conduct of the employees operation, the case will be processed as a Cash Award for Efficiency. This type case can also be considered for an Honor Award.
5. All other cases in which sustained performance or a special act or service merits recognition will be processed under the Step Increase for Superior Accomplishment Program. These cases can also be considered for an Honor Awards.
6. Length-of-Service Awards have not been discussed here primarily because they are based on departmental service and present few problems.

If the awards program is to operate successfully and possess any substantial incentive value, it must be made known to employees generally. Supervisors should be well informed of the plan and of the established standards, so that they will be alert to give employees a "pat-on-the-back" when they deserve recognition.